March 31, 2025

State House, Room 107
107 North Main Street
Concord, NH 03301

david.rochefort@gc.nh.gov

Kathryn.cummings@gc.nh.gov

Re: HB 639 (Cryptocurrency mining)

Senator Rochefort:

As you are certainly aware, one of Bethlehem biggest assets, for our residents as well as visitors, is the abundance of conservation and forest lands. In our most recent Master Plan, the Town identified its rural character and outdoor recreation opportunities as two key elements that define what Bethlehem is and why people choose to live in the Community. This large percentage of undeveloped rural land may also make our area attractive to crypto mining businesses.

The Select Board is concerned that HB 639 could leave towns such as Bethlehem without the ability to protect itself from crypto mining’s environmental impacts, which include water quality and usage, noise levels, and the generation of an enormous amount of waste.

Research of these impacts on towns in other states that have crypto mining facilities provides us with a wealth of information. This is not just musing about what might happen, but real data. We would be happy to provide more details on the problems these towns are facing, at your request.

The crypto mining industry’s impacts on communities include: issues with the volume and types of waste going to transfer stations and into landfills, issues with high usage water needs, issues with what burdens the industry would place on our town’s infrastructure, and lastly from our Master Plan, how the industry would change the character of Bethlehem and our quality of life.

Bethlehem is committed to protecting its natural resources. Several years ago we passed an Aquifer Ordinance. There is no guarantee that our ordinance would be effective against the voracious need crypto mining has for water. The water to cool these towers has to come from somewhere and the hot water generated from this cooling process has to go somewhere. We can safely assume there will be environmental impacts associated with both the collection and releasing of water needed for these facilities.

Bethlehem also has a noise ordinance. With 24/7 noise from these facilities compared to “a jet engine on a runway”, HB 639 provides a dedicated legal avenue for dispute resolution but does not seem to require compliance with local noise ordinances BEFORE building the facility. And, just as with the Aquifer Ordinance, there is no guarantee that our ordinance would be effective against the decibels of noise these facilities make. It’s safe to say the industry has much deeper pockets for litigation than the Town of Bethlehem.

Overall, HB 639 seems more about protecting the crypto mining industry from state and local oversight than about protecting our communities against the negative impacts of this industry. The Town of Bethlehem Select Board urges you to vote against House Bill 639.

Regards,

Town of Bethlehem Select Board

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Nancy Strand, Chair

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April Hibberd, Vice Chair

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Mike Bruno

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Andrea Knowles

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Casey MacDonald

Note: The volunteer Bethlehem Transfer Station Committee, who advises the Select Board on our future transfer station, is in full support of this letter.

Contact Info:

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